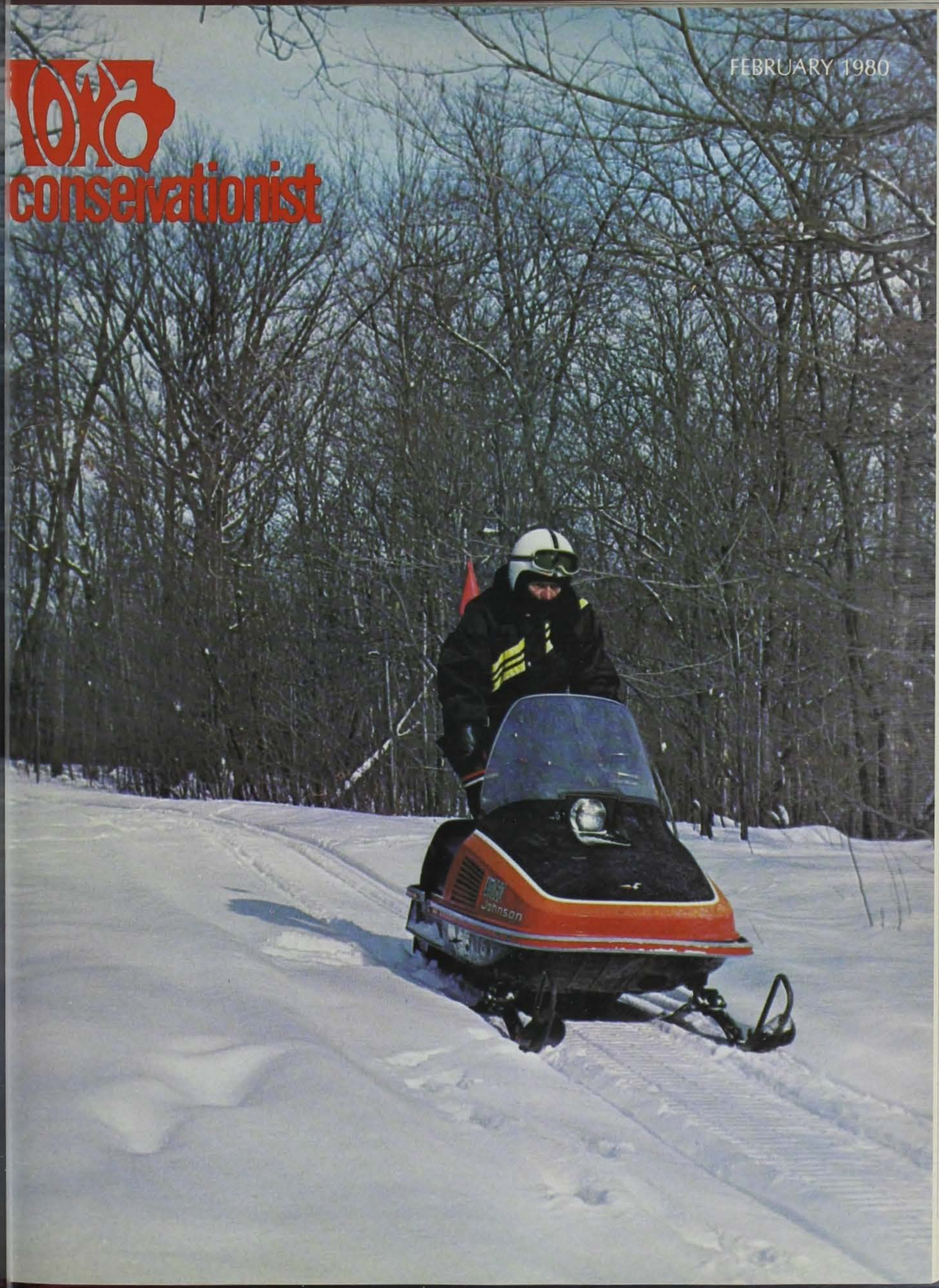
# Iowa conservationist

FEBRUARY 1980



# Heyday of Fur Hunting and Trapping

by Ronald D. Andrews
FURBEARER RESOURCE SPECIALIST

MOST OF US who have studied the history and the foundation of this great country of ours vividly picture early pioneers pushing westward, trapping furbearers along their route to barter with the Indians and early fur traders. This barter and fur trade to many early settlers was the only way to survive the winters and continue their push toward the Pacific Coast. This land was teeming with wildlife, and there seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of wild fur creatures. It has been said that without the fur trade the settlement of this country would have occurred at a much slower pace. As we look back at the early furs harvested and pelt values, they were high by 1800's standards and until the mid 1970's, I would have considered these early days the "heyday" of fur hunting and trapping.

During the late 1960's, however, we began to see some interesting changes in the fur market, particularly the fox pelt market. Red fox pelt values seemed to soar to previous World War II levels of $10 apiece. Most other fur values remained at average to low value. Red fox pelt values remained in the $10 range until 1972-73 when they jumped again to slightly over $20 apiece. Also, during that year two other long-haired critters, raccoon and coyote, fur value doubled from the previous several years. Raccoons averaged $8.50 each and coyotes averaged over $11.

The demand for short-haired fur, such as mink, muskrat, and beaver, continued at low to average levels. The 1972-73 season also marked the first year that total value of fur harvested in Iowa surpassed the 3 million dollar figure. From the 1972-73 season through 1978-79, the total record fur value was broken each succeeding year except for 1974-75 when there was about $200,000 decline for the previous year. Table I shows the total value of furs purchased from Iowa hunters and trappers by Iowa fur buyers from 1960-61 through 1978-79. Until the 1975-76 season the demand for short-haired furs remained relatively low; however, in that year muskrat pelt prices began to increase. Fox, coyote, and raccoon pelt prices swelled to an average of approximately $40, $16, and $18 respectively.

Pelt values for fox, coyote, raccoon and muskrat have continued to snowball through the 1978-79 season. An interesting footnote to these increasing values is that it was not until 1971-72 that total raccoon pelt value surpassed muskrat value. Since that time, raccoon values have ranged from 1 to over 5 million dollars higher than total muskrat values. Another interesing aspect that shows this changing fur value picture is the fact that during the 3 seasons from 1976-77 through 1978-79, the total red fox pelt value has surpassed 1 million dollars each year.

A record total pelt value of 12.6 million dollars of fur was purchased by Iowa fur buyers in 1978-79. The 1979-80 fur values will not be complete until June of 1980. Table II shows the breakdown of various pelt values. It is interesting to note that the $64.65 average value for fox, the $36.47 value for coyote, the $31.18 value for raccoon and the $4.49 value for muskrats are all individual record pelt values. If one looks at the mushrooming pelt values, then the 1970's would probably be considered the "heyday" of the fur hunt and trapping.

What causes these ridiculously high p values? Most American raw furs are sold the European markets, particularly Fran and Italy, which are the fur fashion capitals the world. The long-haired furs have be most in demand during the 1970's until abou years ago when muskrat fur became a l item. It has correspondingly increased values.

Photo by Robert Henderson

, hard to believe as it may seem, r very important factor especially dur- last 5 years, has been the devaluation dollar on the foreign money markets. It nore dollars to purchase the American ause our dollar is worth less than most money.

r economic analyst once described this ation phenomenon using the opossum xample. In 1973 at the European mar- el, a 5-dollar opossum was equivalent to rks. In 1977, this same opossum was 10 dollars, but it took only 18 marks to the dollar value. This kind of change in ury equivalence alone can have tremen- npact on fur values without considering supply and the fashion demands.

this increasing fur value we have also ur hunters and trappers increase in r, many of them out to make a so-called uck". Unfortunately this has created a erable amount of greediness and self- s on the part of many fur pursuers. I it is human nature; when the almighty come into the picture, people lose sight fact that pursuing their quarry for sport creation has a priceless value. The re- g outdoor experience with nature can siderably more awarding that the greed as many fur critters and as many dollars sible.

Unsportsmanlike conduct such as stealing fur, stealing or destroying traps, cutting down den trees, stealing coon hounds, using all kinds of modern day mechanical means such as 4 wheels, snowmobiles and CB's to take their quarry, trespassing on private property and even occasionally donnybrooks over a particular animal or territory is illegal and is not condoned by the Iowa Conservation Commission. Such conduct only further tarnishes what is sometimes an already dull image of the American hunting and trapping public and of a heritage we should be proud of. I quite frankly am looking forward to the day that the bottom drops out of the fur market. This will reduce considerably the unsportsmanlike conduct of those currently pursuing fur bearers for the almighty dollar. Not only will the job of the Conservation Commission be easier and the image of the sportsmen improved, but also the fur animals will find life a little easier and fairer when being pursued. I personally wish that the heyday of fur hunting and trapping could continue with the opportunity for all individuals to go out and pursue their sport leisurely and not get caught up using their modern day gadgetry, enjoy the experience and beauty of nature and show respect for wildlife, property, and others who enjoy wildlife. My only hope is that this day is only a short time away. □

*Table I. Total value of furs purchased from fur buyers, 1960-61 thru 1978-79.*

| FUR SEASON | TOTAL VALUE | FUR SEASON | TOTAL VALUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1960-61 | 327,976.96 | 1970-71 | 736,023.60 |
| 1961-62 | 527,389.06 | 1971-72 | 1,700,782.97 |
| 1962-63 | 743,506.24 | 1972-73 | 3,061,442.27 |
| 1963-64 | 1,069,812.88 | 1973-74 | 5,083,978.50 |
| 1964-65 | 536,544.07 | 1974-75 | 4,818,166.85 |
| 1965-66 | 753,832.31 | 1975-76 | 7,390,136.90 |
| 1966-67 | 815,957.01 | 1976-77 | 8,976,168.74 |
| 1967-68 | 600,422.01 | 1977-78 | 8,871,156.58 |
| 1968-69 | 1,355,639.03 | 1978-79 | 12,516,946.51 |
| 1969-70 | 1,090,212.59 | | |

*Table II. Furs Purchased From Iowa Trappers and Hunters as Reported by owa Fur Buyers During the 1978-79 Season**

| Species | Number Purchased | Percent Change From 1977-78 | Avg. Price Per Pelt | Total Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muskrat | 467,721 | + 82 | $ 4.49 | $ 2,100,067.39 |
| Mink | 23,277 | + 78 | 14.48 | 337,050.96 |
| Raccoon | 251,985 | − 5 | 31.18 | 7,856,892.30 |
| Beaver | 4,327 | + 26 | 9.29 | 40,197.83 |
| Red Fox | 24,348 | + 7 | 64.65 | 1,574,098.20 |
| Gray Fox | 2,115 | + 29 | 39.06 | 82,611.90 |
| Coyote | 10,627 | − 12 | 36.47 | 387,566.69 |
| Opossum | 26,160 | − 27 | 2.56 | 66,969.60 |
| Striped Skunk | 6,545 | + 82 | 2.29 | 14,988.05 |
| Badger | 1,936 | + 2 | 29.14 | 56,415.05 |
| Weasel | 82 | +122 | 1.08 | 88.56 |
| TOTAL PELTS | 828,123 | + 34 | TOTAL VALUE | $12,516,946.51 |

*Approximately 206 of approximately 242 licensed fur dealers reporting.*


IOWA CONSERVATIONIST
MAGAZINE

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Cover photography by Ron Johnson



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# Sportsman with a Spear

by Wendell Simonson
CONSERVATION OFFICER

HIS NAME IS SETH EIMEN and his farm is located south of Homestead, Iowa. He sometimes refers to himself as a "stubborn Dutchman" — and with semi-retirement he decided there was a world of things he hadn't had time to do before. He has bagged a couple of deer while perched perilously high from the ground in a tree stand during the shotgun deer season. His goal now is to bag one with bow and arrow. This past spring he spent several days in the Shimek forest on a turkey hunt — and while he didn't bag one, you can bet he'll try again. He has hunted squirrels with a muzzle loader, built a farm pond, and planted trees for wildlife cover.

His wanderlust has taken him to Alaska, and he has looked over the Yukon Territory. However, he still loves Iowa and her wildlife resources and outdoor recreation. Lake and river fishing, and rough fish spearing come in for their share of his attention.

He bought an old home-made fish spear at an Iowa farm sale. Sometimes he spears rough fish through the ice during bitter cold weather. During the spring and early summer months when swollen streams spill out into the shallows, you can find him trying for carp with that spear.

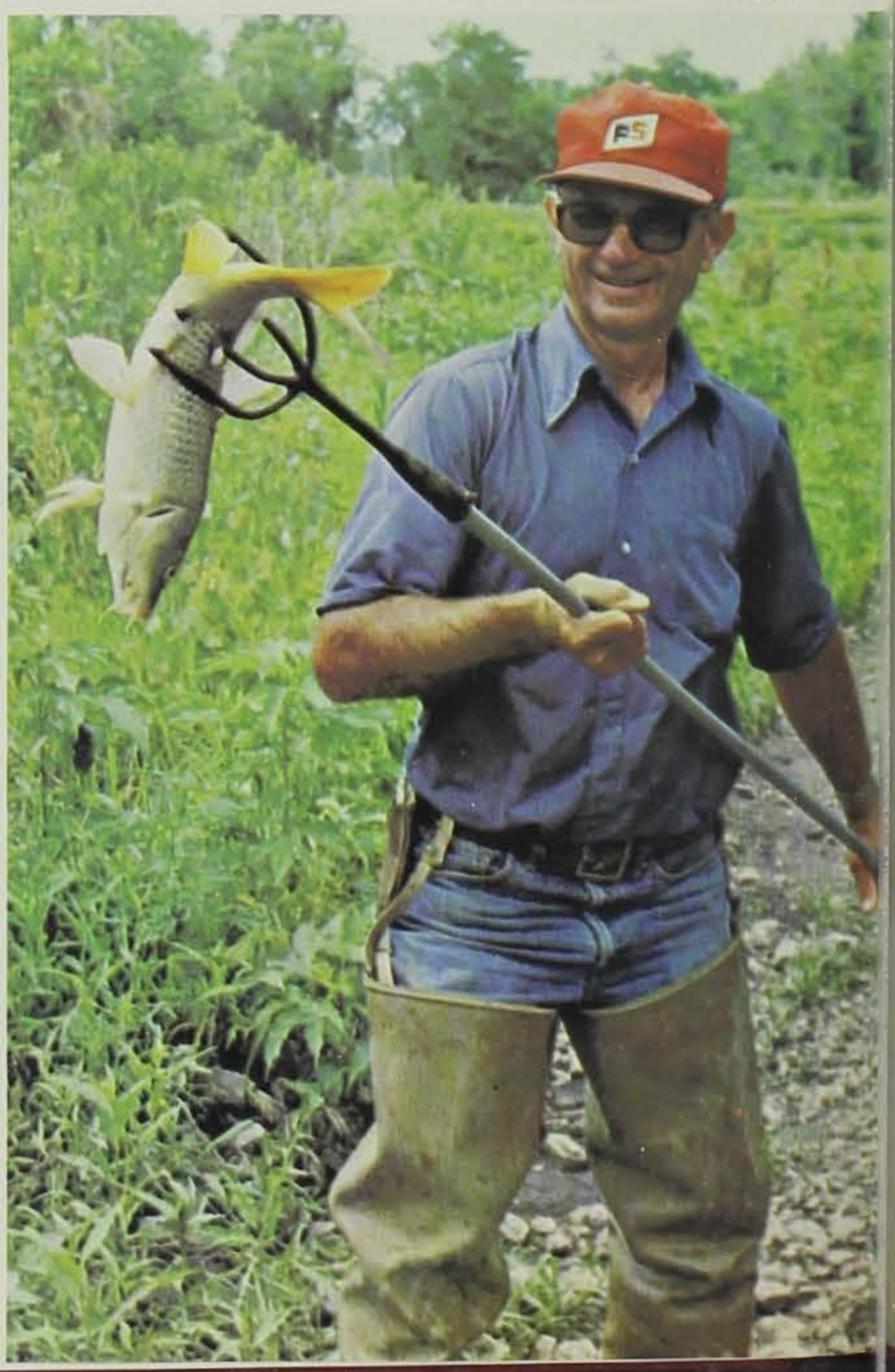
I found him one day in the Hawkeye Wildlife Area on the Coralville reservoir — spear in hand and poised like a statue along a shallow water bayou. I had taken several picures with the camera before he suddenly thrust the spear at a good size carp, slid it onto his stringer, and came over to visit a while.

Spearing in clear shallow water, he pointed out, didn't take too much skill — but in deeper water the fish weren't always where he thought they were! The carp leaves a small wake on the water as it probes in the shallows and underwater vegetation. There is quite a heavy run of carp during spawning time, also. It is the wake that the spear fisherman watches for. The carp can see very well and sense vibrations — so the fisherman must try to be quiet and as motionless as possible.

Iowa law permits the spearing of rough fish only — these are listed as carp, buffalo, quillback, gar, sheepshead, dogfish and other fish that may be designated by the commission. A fishing license is required, and the rough fish can be speared day or night, and with artificial light.

Don't make the mistake of turning up your nose at the thought of eating a carp from fresh water. If you've never tried one properly pickled, or smoked, then you've missed some good eating. And carpburgers — delicious! *(Grind 2 lbs. of fish fillets, 1 lb. raw potatoes, ½ lb. raw onions. Add 1 egg, a little flour, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well, make into patties, fry like hamburgers).* Seth cleans his fish promptly, scores the meat deeply and close together with a very sharp, thin knife, and his wife Pauline puts them in a batter, then deep-fat fries them. I'll never turn down an invitation to a fish fry at the Eimen farm!

*Photos by the Author*



# The Coyote, Dog, and Sheep Dilemma in Iowa

*by Joseph M. Schaefer, Graduate Student, ISU and*
*Ronald D. Andrews, State Furbearer Biologist*

"THOSE DAMN VARMINTS are ruining the sheep industry . . . and ought to be eliminated."

Of course the animal attacked by this common opinion is none other than the controversial coyote (alias prairie wolf). Ironically, man's many attempts to eliminate the coyote seem to have helped create a "Super-Canid." This crafty critter has adapted to the influences of man, as well as other environmental factors, and is continually extending its range in the United States.

About 20 years ago the number of coyotes in the state was hardly noticeable. But recently the population has mushroomed to the extent that many Iowans are now affected by this predator. Sheep producers are suffering more losses. Hunters and trappers are experiencing greater recreational opportunity and reaping benefits from high fur prices and bounties. Protectionists are concerned about the humaneness of the coyote harvesting methods, and of course, the Iowa Conservation Commission is caught in the middle of the controversy because it has the responsibility of establishing a management plan for this species that is in the best interests of all Iowa residents. Before implementing such a plan, information must be gathered so that everyone will have a better understanding of the coyote's habits and how it is affecting people in Iowa.

So in 1973, the Iowa Conservation Commission, in cooperation with the Agricultural Experiment Station and Iowa State University, began an intensive study on the Iowa prairie wolf. Coyote carcasses were collected from furbuyers in the heart of Iowa's coyote range. The age of these animals was determined using a technique similar to aging trees. A very small slice of the coyote's canine tooth was cut and placed under a microscope. This microscopic view showed yearly growth rings like those on a cut tree trunk. Stomachs and scats of coyotes were also collected in order to obtain information on the food consumed by the coyote in this midwestern farm state. Some coyote pups were tagged and left at the site where they were captured. When these tags were returned to the Iowa Conservation Commission by hunters and trappers, the distances that the animals traveled away from their original den sites could then be determined. All of this information compiled during the first phase of the coyote project helped us to understand a great deal more about the largest wild carnivore in Iowa. So far we have found that there are a relatively great number of young coyotes in Iowa which are available to replace the fatalities and, therefore, help the population as a whole withstand hunting and trapping pressure. Tag returns have also shown that coyotes are capable of traveling up to 202 miles from their original den sites as they wander in search of new unoccupied territories. Their average movement, however, was 30-35 miles (as the crow flies) from where they were born to where they were taken by hunters and trappers.

Southern Iowa has a great deal of good habitat for the coyote. The many timbered draws and brush piles that are formed after timber clearing provide the security, privacy, abundant food supply and relatively cooler temperatures that make excellent denning sites for the prairie wolf. Usually these dens are located within 100 yards of a good water supply. Open ridges in pastures and hay fields serve as lookout posts where coyotes can survey their surrounding environment. Corn and other grain fields are also utilized by coyotes for cover during the late summer months when the stalks are several feet high. Unlike northern Iowa, the southern portion of the state has a more diversified habitat which provides the predator with a variety of prey or food items.

The midwestern coyote's menu is quite long although it seems to prefer a diet similar to that of its western cousin. Rabbits, mice and other small mammals are at the top of the list. An assortment of birds, insects and plants, particularly the fruit, are further down the menu. It is also a well known fact that some coyotes feed on livestock either as fresh meat or carrion. It is this aspect of livestock depredation with which we are most concerned in the current phase of the Iowa coyote studies. →

## The Sheep Producer's Story

In order to get baseline information on this controversial subject, a questionnaire was sent out to 3,173 sheep producers in southern Iowa. The 1,617 respondents to this questionnaire indicated that coyotes were responsible for more sheep losses during 1975 than any other cause. However, this questionnaire seemed to raise more questions than it answered. Why did only a few producers claim a great number of losses due to coyote predation while the majority reported no problems at all with coyotes? Why did some producers comment that they had no sheep killed by coyotes in 1975 but had a great deal of problems with this predator in past years? Why did some producers suggest that the coyote was being framed for a lot of the killings that were actually caused by dogs?

Because more facts were needed, during the summers of 1976 and 1977 we examined and verified the cause of death for 227 sheep that were claimed by their owners to have been attacked by coyotes or dogs. This part of the study was conducted within a 695 square mile area located within Appanoose, Davis and Van Buren Counties. The results of this project showed that for the most part, these people are making a sincere and honest effort to report their losses accurately. In fact, there were even a few cases where dogs were blamed for losses that were actually caused by coyotes. Sheep producers who made invalid claims did not do so intentionally but rather had little or no previous experience with predators killing their sheep and therefore, were unfamiliar with the characteristic clues which usually help to distinguish between coyote and dog predation.

## The Coyote's Story

Coyotes in Iowa usually whelp their young sometime in April. For the first few weeks of life the pups are helpless and depend solely on the female's milk for nourishment. During this time, the male hunts under the cover of darkness for enough food to supply himself and his mate. When the young coyotes begin to venture out of the den and gain an appetite for meat, the food demands get larger and sometimes the female will hunt with her mate as a team. They gorge their bellies full of food, return to the den site and regurgitate enough for the pups to eat. The young coyotes lap up these delicacies leaving the den area clean and free of food remains and thus less conspicuous to man and relatively free of flies and other insects. Being the clever critters that they are, some have learned that it is a lot easier to kill one or two livestock rather than spend all night killing rabbits and rodents to get ample food for the family.

Coincidentally, young and tasty lambs, that were born just a few months earlier, are put out to feed in Iowa pastures during the spring months. Some coyotes become addicted to this food source. If it is readily available within their home range, they may kill a great number of sheep throughout the year. One sheep producer in Van Buren County had about 30 sheep killed by coyotes each year during 1976 and 1977. Pigs, calves and poultry may also be victimized by coyotes but the situation with sheep is more widespread. Sheep-killing coyotes seldom depend solely on sheep but rather include sheep in their diets at irregular intervals. Because they are opportunistic feeders, the availability of rabbits, mice and other prey in their territory might determine how much they will depend on sheep. Presently very little is known about this relationship.

Whenever coyotes choose sheep for a meal while traveling through a pasture, they usually attack their victims in the neck area and the sheep then dies by suffocating or by bleeding to death if large blood vessels are damaged in the struggle. Normally coyotes will kill only one or two sheep during each incident and feed off soft internal organs, fat and the hind quarters. However, there are exceptions. Some coyotes prefer to feed on other parts of the carcass. Others will not feed at all after a kill. A few will kill in an unusual and somewhat dog-like manner. And occasionally coyotes will kill several sheep during a single night encounter with a flock.

## Man's Best Friend?!?!?!?!

IT IS DIFFICULT to detect a pattern or trend in the sheep killing by dogs. Most of these friendly canines have no fear of man and therefore, may become involved in a sheep killing incident at any time of the day or night at any time of the year, and anywhere from the remotest part of a pasture to inside barns. Usually several dogs team up before engaging in this sport and 20 or more sheep could easily fall victim within a couple of minutes.

Dogs, unlike coyotes, seem to chase and kill sheep for sport and to inflict wounds on unpredictable parts of the victim's body. Many times the sheep do not die immediately after such an attack but succumb as a result of the open wounds later becoming infected with insects.

Any dogs, from a Chihuahua to sheep dogs, to German shepherds, that are not tied up or controlled in some manner, are potential sheep killers. The small dogs of course, are not capable of tackling a sheep by themselves but many times act as accomplices by exciting the larger dogs and stimulating them to give chase and do the actual killing. Small dogs can also spook a flock of sheep without the larger dogs present and cause the sheep to fall into ditches resulting in fatal injuries. Even some dogs that were owned and raised by sheep producers for the purpose of herding sheep have turned out to be renegades.

Most often the owners of sheep killing dogs are reluctant to believe that their "best friend" could ever commit such a malicious act. With the burden of proof on the sheep producer, there is little chance that he can win a court decision regarding such matters.

## Coy-Dogs

Occasionally coyotes and dogs will mate and many times the resulting offspring will cause livestock problems. These coy-dogs have the cunning characteristics of the coyote and yet the unwariness of dogs. With this combination they could be a larger threat to sheep producers than either the coyote or the dog.

## *Livestock Management Practices*

Losses due to coyote predation are not shared equally among sheep producers. Some producers who graze their sheep in areas that seem to be ideal coyote habitat, suffer no losses while other producers may lose 30 or more sheep to coyotes throughout the year. This can be partially explained by different management practices of various operations. We found the regularly practiced permanent and temporary night confinement helps to reduce the number of lambs lost to coyote predation.

However, the more habituated sheep-killers will pursue their woolly prey into well-fenced and lighted corrals within a few yards of farmsteads. One sheep producer in Van Buren County had several lambs killed during 1976, both at night in the corral and at dawn in the pasture when the sheep were let out to graze. During the next winter, one of the local trappers killed an old three-legged coyote within ½ mile of this operation. The fact that the sheep producer had no coyote problems in 1977 suggests that this three-legged animal probably had difficulty in obtaining enough food from natural prey so he occasionally resorted to killing sheep. This story agrees with what many southern Iowa natives believe — many times the "sheep-killer wolves" are those that are crippled-up in some manner.

We have also verified losses by some sheep producers who feed their lambs in confinement but have had problems with coyotes killing the older sheep and late lambs that were left in the pasture. Another problem with confinement is that not all pastures are near farmsteads nor do all farmers have facilities to corral the sheep at night.

In order for the land to be worth anything in the farmer's eyes, it must be grazed if it isn't suitable for crop production. The success of any farm operation is always a gamble. In this situation the sheep producer either bets that he will have no problems with coyotes without using confinement or that an investment of time and money in some sort of security program will be needed in order to reduce losses to coyote predation. In addition to confinement, various other coyote deterrents such as goats, cattle, or saddled mares grazing with the sheep, bell collars, radios, special breeds of watch dogs, scare crows and others have been tried by a few farmers with varying success. It is possible that some of these methods may deter certain coyotes, but it is difficult to determine if the deterrent is actually keeping coyotes away or whether they simply had no intention of killing the sheep in the first place. The federal government, a few state governments and universities are devoting much time and money toward research to discover the ultimate coyote deterrent and so far electric fencing seems to be the most promising.

Dogs have no fear of entering corrals and barns near farmsteads so it is difficult to reduce this threat by altering management practices. The only control method that is presently employed and that proves to be fairly effective is to shoot any suspicious looking dog that wanders in the vicinity of a sheep pasture and looks like it is "up to no good."

On the other hand, some dogs can actually help reduce losses due to both dog and coyote predation. Their natural instinct is to protect the hand that feeds them as well as the territory and they may discourage potential predators from approaching sheep confined near the farmstead or at least alert the owner of the potential problems.

## *The Sportsmen's Perspective*

Because a fool proof deterrent has not been developed yet, farmers in Iowa depend more on hunters and to a lesser extent trappers to eliminate problem coyotes. Most of the hunting is voluntary and carried out by the use of trail dogs, and several hunters. Because of the ideal weather conditions for the dogs, less cover for the coyotes, more free time for the hunters, better pelt condition, and greater movement of dispersing coyotes, almost all of the coyotes are harvested during the winter months. Ironically, many hunting groups are inactive during the summer when most of the coyote problems occur. Some of the more experienced groups hunt all year and the sheep producers rely heavily on their success to eliminate the sheep-killers. But it is difficult to be successful during the hot and dry summer months when little scent is left in the tracks for the dogs to follow. Some hunters even believe that they are killing only the dumb coyotes and the smarter ones are adapting to this control method and becoming more

*(Continued on Page 13)*

*Photos by the authors*

## *Conservation Loses Bill Brabham*

William C. "Bill" Brabham, 58, Director of the Iowa Conservation Commission, died January 13 of respiratory difficulties associated with cancer.

Named director of the Commission on June 19, 1979, Brabham had been employed by the agency for 29 years. He served as deputy director from October, 1971 to being named director. Prior to that time he served as the Commission's director of Planning and Coordination.

Brabham joined the Commission in June of 1950 shortly after graduating from Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. There he majored in forestry and minored in wildlife management. His first appointment was as Unit Game Manager at Sweet Marsh in Bremer County. In August of 1950 he was transferred to a similar post at the Ingham-High Game Management Area in Emmet County.

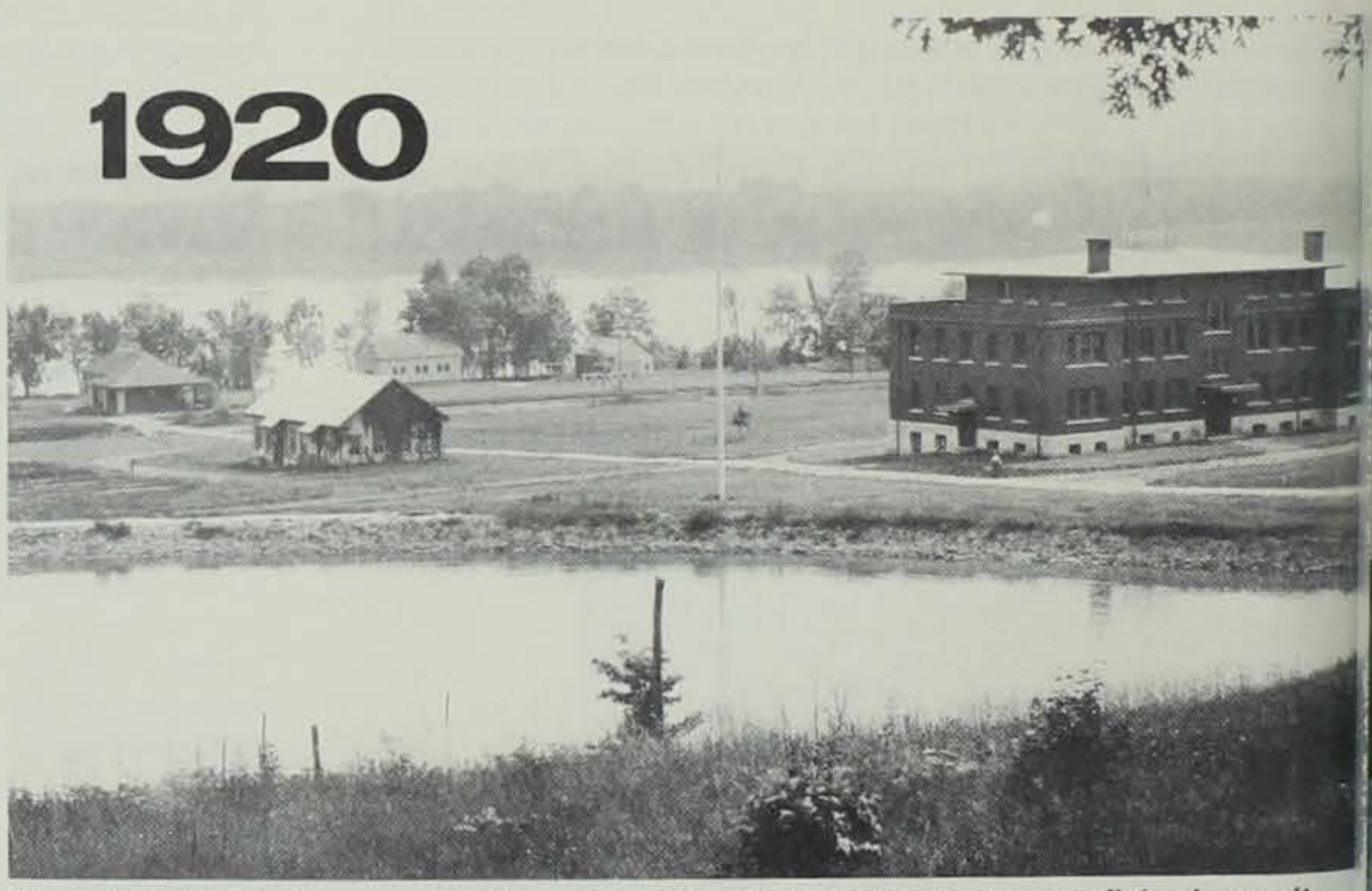
In January of 1958 Brabham was appointed as Field Assistant to the Superintendent of Federal Aid. The Commission granted him Superintendent's rank when they appointed him as Chief of the Game Section in 1959.

A Commissioner on the Missouri River Basin Commission, Brabham also served as an alternate on the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission and the Iowa Bicentennial Commission. He was a member of the National and Iowa Wildlife Federation; the Izaak Walton League, Masonic Lodge, Methodist Church and the American Legion. Brabham served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II.

A native of Elkader, Brabham's survivors include his wife, Dorothy; two daughters, Judy Miller of Baltimore, Maryland, and Jean Ann Gardner of West Des Moines; and two grandchildren.

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAIRPORT FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT AND ITS HISTORY

by Allan Van Vooren
FISH MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST



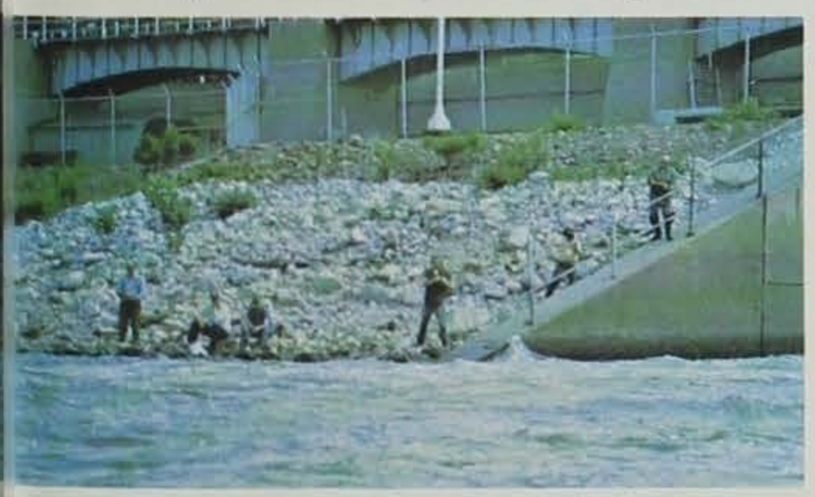

***The Fairport Fish Management Unit, one of the Commission's newest fisheries units, is located on the Mississippi River eight miles upstream from Muscatine. The three story laboratory stood idle except for a brief period when it was used to house German prisoners of war and later used as a care facility for the elderly.***

THE FAIRPORT FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT, one of the Commission's newest fisheries units, is located on the Mississippi River eight miles upstream from Muscatine at the site of what was once the most important center for freshwater fisheries investigations in the country. The history of the site goes back to the turn of the century when beds of freshwater mussels, or clams, in the Mississippi were showing marked depletion due to over-harvesting. Mussel shells, from which pearl buttons were cut, were vital to the pearl button industry which had had its origin and continued to focus at Muscatine, Iowa. The Fairport Biological Station was established at this site in 1908 by the U.S. Fish Commission (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) to work on freshwater mussel research and propagation.

Situated on sixty acres, the station included several staff houses, three summer cottages, a three story brick laboratory building, a fish holding house with raceways, a shop, and various other storage and outbuildings.

Early research at the facility documented several important aspects of the mussel's life cycle which had not been previously understood, and led to intensive artificial propagation of mussels at the facility and elsewhere.

***Habitats in this portion of the river vary from quiet backwater ponds and slow moving side channels to the large open river and roaring tailwaters below the navigation dams.***



***Sport fishing opportunities on the Mississippi rival those found anywhere in the state. A major portion of fish management efforts on the river must be aimed at minimizing the adverse impacts of channel maintenance, commercial navigation, and associated shoreline development.***

For a period of twenty years after its establishment, the Fairport Biological Station was also the most important center of freshwater fish culture investigations in the country. The first successful artificial propagation of channel catfish was achieved at Fairport. Experiments were conducted on pond fertilization to improve fish production. Experiments were also conducted on the artificial propagation of turtles, sturgeon, paddlefish, buffalo fish, and largemouth bass.

Research at Fairport began phasing out in the late 1920's due to a lack of funds and a shift in fisheries interest to the west coast. After 1932 the facility was used solely for fish propagation. The three story laboratory stood idle except for a brief period when it was used to house German prisoners of war and later used as a care facility for the elderly. The building was eventually torn down in 1972.

In 1973 the entire Fairport Station, which included 18 acres of warmwater rearing ponds, was turned over to the Iowa Conservation Commission and since then has been utilized for the propagation of largemouth bass and bluegill to stock farmponds and public lakes throughout the state.

The Fairport Fish Management Unit was established at the facility in 1975 to conduct fish management activities on the portion of the Mississippi River bordering Iowa between Davenport and Keokuk, covering some 120 miles of river.

Habitats in this portion of the river vary from quiet backwater ponds and slow moving side channels to the large open river and roaring tailwaters below the navigation dams. This diversity in habitat supports diverse fish populations. A major emphasis of work by the Fairport Fish Management Unit has been aimed at documenting the fish species associated with each of these various habitats and determining the status of those populations.

Though overlooked by many, sport fishing opportunities on the Mississippi rival those found anywhere in the state, with major species being channel catfish, crappie, bluegill, white bass, sauger, and walleye. Creel census surveys have been conducted to measure the quality and extent of sport fishing in portions of the river.

Many of the traditional fish management options applicable to smaller contained bodies of water are not practical on a large open river system which spans state boundaries such as the Mississippi. In addition, the river is primarily managed as a commercial transportation corridor by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Management of the river for transportation, including dredging, spoil disposal, and water level manipulation, is in many instances not harmonious with management for fish populations.

Consequently a major portion of fish management efforts on the river must be aimed at minimizing the adverse impacts of channel maintenance, commercial navigation, and associated shoreline development, and attempting to preserve or enhance the fish habitat present now. Working with other state and federal agencies, including the Corp of Engineers, through such organizations as the Great River Environmental Action Team (GREAT) and the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, progress is being made in this direction. Making the sand from dredging available for beneficial use rather than disposing of it in the river or the floodplain; rejuvenating silted backwaters; and manipulation of water levels to benefit fish and wildlife while accommodating navigation are some of the steps being taken or planned. This coordinated approach to management will enhance both the fish and wildlife resources of the Mississippi and the enjoyment of the public that utilizes them.

For further information on fish, fishing, or fish mangement activities on the Mississippi River contact the *Fish Management Biologist, Fairport Fish Management Unit, RR 3, Muscatine, Iowa 52671 (319) 263-5062.* □

# Statewide Steel Shot for 1980 Waterfowl

by Roger Sparks

*Photo by R. Runge*


IOWA WATERFOWL HUNTERS will be shooting steel shot over a large portion of the state next year. The Iowa Conservation Commission has approved a rule regulating the means and methods of take for migratory game birds for 1980. These include expanding the steel shot requirements from several counties to all waterfowl areas in Iowa.

The new rule restricts hunting of ducks, geese, and coots to the use of shotguns shooting steel shot only on nearly all Iowa waters and a 150-yard zone adjacent to them. All lakes, reservoirs, marshes, bayous, backwaters, seasonally-flooded areas,
and the Mississippi, Missouri, Des Moines, Iowa, Cedar, Wapsipinicon, Skunk, Turkey, and Upper Iowa Rivers are included. All other ditches, streams and rivers, artificial impoundments under five acres, and temporary sheet waters are exempt from the requirement, provided they are more than 150 yards from a major water area. The rule pertains to all gauges without exemption, with the understanding that steel shot will be available in 20, 12, and 10 gauge.

The move to steel shot is an effort to curb lead poisoning of ducks and geese. Millions of waterfowl are poisoned each year in the U.S. after they pick up and ingest the toxic, expended lead shot from the bottoms of rivers, marshes,
and lakes.

Opponents of steel shot argue that the less dense steel loads will not travel as far and will thus tend to cripple more ducks, perhaps offsetting the decrease in lead poisoning losses. Recent studies, however, indicate that today's improved steel loads, with their high muzzle velocity and tight patterns, will perform at least as well as standard lead loads.

The Commission approved the notice of intended action at an early date to allow dealers time to stock the steel shot shells and to provide opportunity for public imput. Final action will not be taken until the March or April Commission meeting. More details will follow in a future issue.

# Hunting Continues on Preserves

Now that most of the 1979-80 hunting seasons are over there is no need to quit hunting. There are six state licensed shooting preserves in Iowa where hunters can still enjoy their sport. These licensed shooting preserves raise or purchase their own birds and release them for hunting purposes. There is a charge for each bird killed.

The season for hunting on these shooting preserves is from September 1 thru March 31 of each year. A resident hunting or a special non-resident hunting license is required to hunt on these areas. Anyone interested in hunting these areas must make his or her own arrangements.

**1979 - 1980**
**PRIVATE LICENSED SHOOTING PRESERVES**
*Shooting Preserve Hunting Season is from September 1 - March 31 of Each Year*

| COUNTY | SHOOTING PRESERVE NAME | OWNER OR MANAGER | LOCATION FROM NEAREST TOWN | SPECIES AVAILABLE* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clinton | Arrowhead Hunting Club<br>Box 28, Goose Lake, IA 52750 | John Mullin<br>Owner<br>319/527-2267 | 3½ Miles SW of<br>Goose Lake, Iowa | P-Q-C-M |
| Lee | Wingover Ranch<br>RFE, Keokuk, IA 52632 | John Broughton<br>Manager<br>319/524-4151 X334 | 5 miles North of<br>Keokuk, Iowa | P-Q-C-M |
| Jasper | Oak View Game Farm<br>Rt. 1, Prairie City, IA 50228 | Ron DeBruin<br>Owner<br>515/994-2094 | 7 miles SW of<br>Prairie City, IA | P-Q-C-M |
| Tama | North Star Shooting Preserve<br>RFE, Montour, IA 50173 | Arlo Hinegardner<br>Owner<br>515/492-3490 | 3 Miles NE of<br>Montour, IA | P-Q-BG |
| Clay | Outdoorsmen Hunting Club<br>RFE, Webb, IA 51366 | Larry Buettner<br>Owner<br>712/838-4890 | 4 miles West of<br>Webb, Iowa | P-Q-C |
| Allamakee | Wilkes Shooting Preserve<br>Rt. 1, Dorchester, IA 52140 | Lyle Wilkes<br>Owner<br>319/492-5347 | 3½ miles NW of<br>Dorchester, Iowa | P-Q |

*P — Pheasant  Q — Quail  C — Chukar  M — Mallard  BG — Big Game

Special *Non-resident* Shooting Preserve License — $5.00 (For use on shooting preserves only)

# Classroom Corner

By Robert Rye
ADMINISTRATOR, CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

A MYTH IS A STORY or ll founded belief that serves o explain a natural ›henomenon. Myths can be ;athered from students using he Conservation Education Center. As a group studied a ›eaver dam which is located near the Center and is used for our classes the following myths were related. The beaver uses his flat tail as a trowel to pat down mud — another, that he uses his tail to transport grass, earth and stones to the building site.

Students attending our classes have usually done little more than read about beavers and their ponds in books. It is not unusual for students to have misinformed ideas on these or other animals.

The beaver has been important throughout the history of the United States. Because of the trapper's continued search for furs, much of man's movement west was caused by the presence of beaver.

American Indians took advantage of almost all parts of the beaver. The teeth were ground up and used as a drug for pleurisy. Furred skin provided bed robes and clothing. Tanned hides made dresses, leggings and thongs. The flesh was thought of as a delicacy. Later in history the skins were made into felt cloth and then into hats. Castorium produced by glands serves as a fixative for perfumes.

Fish, ducks, muskrats, mink, weasel, turtles, frogs and predatory birds such as the king fishers and herrons benefit from the ponds which the beaver constructs. He provides them with a habitat or home.

You can see the exterior of a beaver lodge and admire the structure of the dams they build to cause water to flood around them; but you cannot easily investigate the interior. The beaver's home is a round mass of sticks and mud rising like a miniature island out of a lake or a small log jam along a river or stream.

If you could look inside you would see that the home is made up of a large room or several smaller ones. In either case you would notice the opening in the floor. The beaver comes and goes through this, reaching land by an underwater route. As the areas in the lodge around the floor openings are wet and cold, the main floor is lightly raised, somewhat like a step. The sleeping quarters are snugly lined with wood fibers or grass. In the wintertime the mud plaster of the lodge freezes and the walls become so strong that even a large animal cannot break through.

To briefly dispell a few of the myths about construction by the beaver, a few facts are: Beavers do carry materials in their front feet and mouth. They actually work with their fore feet — sometimes with the side of their head — to push and poke mud into place. The tail is used as a support while they are dropping trees, as well as to steer and propel its body in the water, and to sound an alarm.

The beaver is the largest North American Rodent,with the adult reaching 4½ feet. It has webbed feet and can use some of its toe nails as a comb.

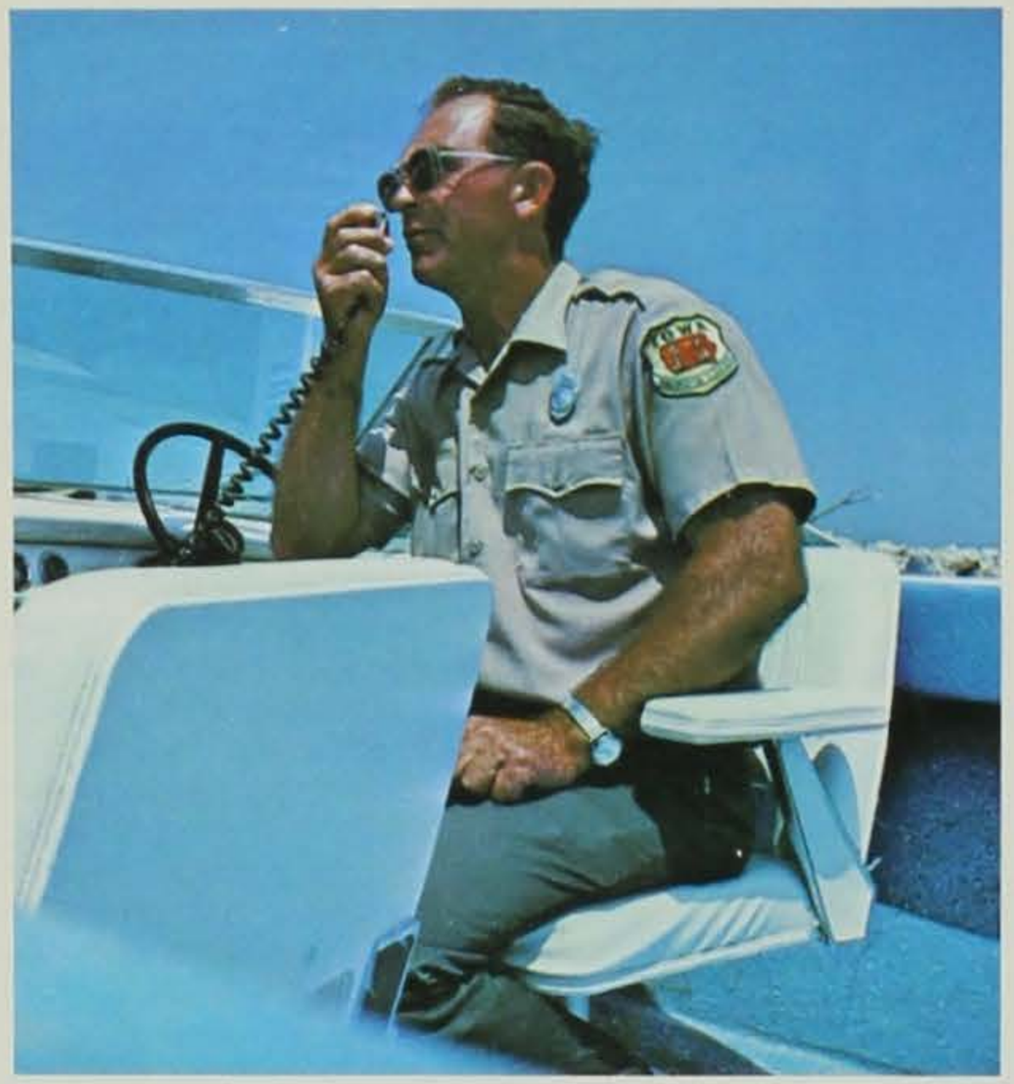
The beaver has an excellent background in history and is of curious interest to most people. We can take advantage of both the beaver and our participant's interest. Beaver are very important in habitats and may be used to develop a habitat study.

Upon arrival at the beaver pond, students usually want to check out the dams and cuttings made by the beaver. They will also search for tracks. Once the interest of the students is satisfied, a search of the area, the beaver's home, or habitat is started. A search for other animals — like those mentioned earlier — is also included. These other animals always leave evidence of their presence even if they do not happen to be there when you are.

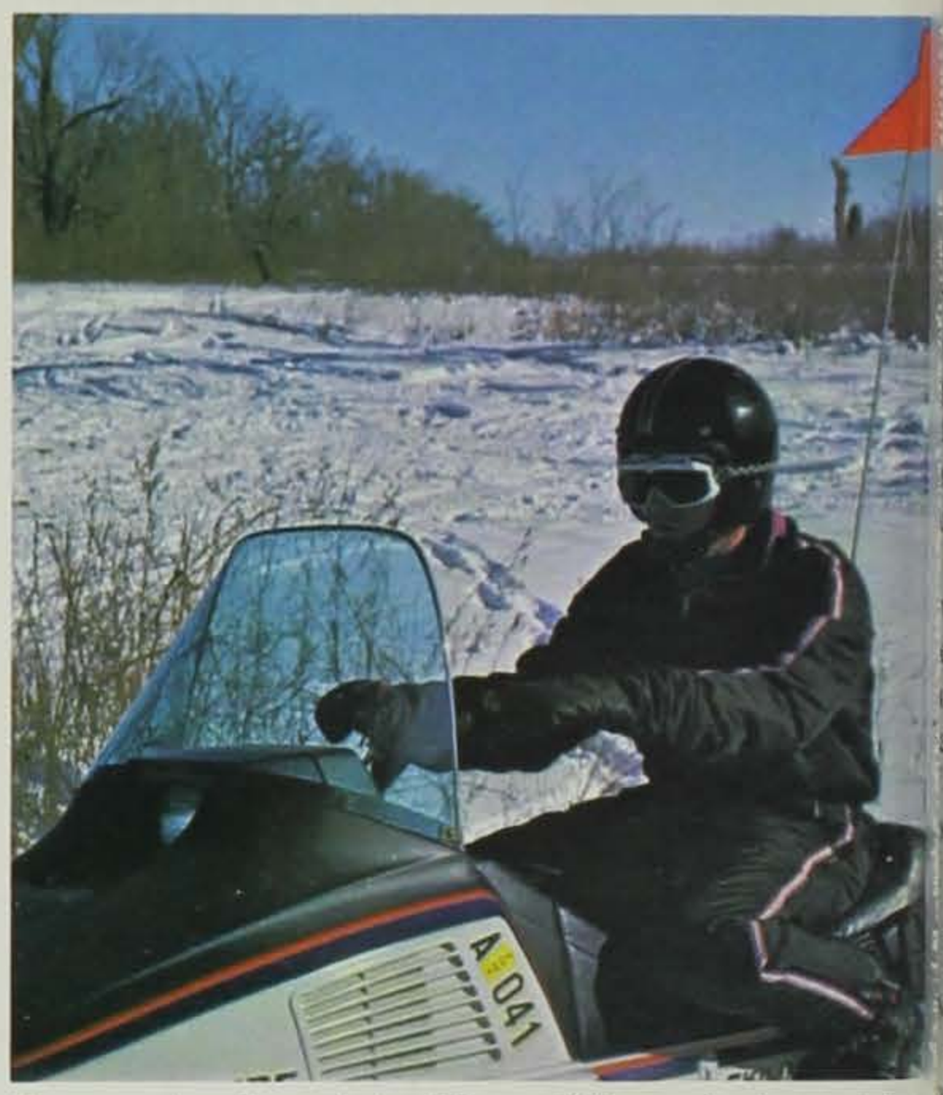
Follow this with a search for a change from "prebeaver" times. Have the students think about the amount of sun light, live and dead trees, silt, waterspeed, water area and other plants. Move up and down the stream for comparisons.

Finish the activity with possibilities for the future if the beaver activities remain. Could it become a valley of fertile soil? What plants will be there? Will the beaver move after the trees are all used?

This exposure to one of nature's resources will provide a life long ethic and an insight into the values and priorities set by society today.



*Remember that conservation officer you saw checking life preservers at the boat ramp last summer? That couldn't have been him out in the snow directing some snowmobilers to a designated trail, could it? The answer is yes, this man is a*




*Conservation Commission Waters Officer who has a job to all year long, not just in the summer. To find out just what this is, maybe we should explain the Waters Section itself.*

# THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION WATERS OFFICER

by Betsy Malueg
RECREATION SAFETY COORDINATOR

## *Establishment*

The Waters Section began its operation with supervisory personnel in 1960. Its first function was to redraft legislation, which would qualify Iowa under the Federal Boat Safety Act. After the adoption of the law in 1961 which covered the basics for a boat registration and safety program, the Waters Section's duties began to grow.

## *Expansion*

The section became involved in sovereign land jurisdiction. The banks and beds of Iowa's meandered lakes and streams are sovereign lands (public) and under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. With the increasing popularity of water-oriented activity, there has been considerable encroachment on this valuable public domain. This activity requires a great deal of patrol and investigation. The section carries this out in conjunction with the management of sovereign lands and adjacent public lands.

The greatest expansion of the section came after the establishment of the Marine Fuel Tax Fund in 1965. This fund provided additional operating funds above that provided by boat registration fees. It also enabled the section to expand its recreation boating access development program and to provide a cost-sharing program for political subdivisions for similar water access facilities.

## *Snowmobiling*

In the early days of snowmobile activity, the only snowmo ing areas available were on private property and frozen s lakes. The section became actively involved in the snowmo program resulting in legislation for registration and regulatio snowmobiles and a coordinated trail program. Trail establishm is encouraged on all state lands and, through the cost-shar program, on county and private areas as well.

Today, the Waters Section employs fifteen full-time s waters officers manning fifteen established year-round ma patrol stations in the state. Each officer covers a territory rang in size from eight to twelve counties. In addition, the stat divided into four regions, each of which is covered by supervisor. Each supervisor's region covers from sixteer thirty-two counties and two to five of the year-round marine pa stations. The central office staff consists of the superintenden the section, associate superintendent, and a recreation sa coordinator.

## *Duties*

The duties of a waters officer are diversified and vary acc ing to the time of year. They can be broken down into two gen areas — enforcement and education.

## *Enforcement-Boating*

)uring the boating season, primary responsibility of the waters cer is the enforcement of the boating laws on the lakes and ams in Iowa. While on the water, officers look for violations n as excessive wake, an overloaded boat, or a boat with no stration. Once a boat is stopped, a routine inspection of all ty equipment is done. This allows the officer to educate the ter on what type of equipment is needed on a boat and how to for it.

n addition to enforcement activities, waters officers become olved in search and rescue missions, accident investigations, inspection of boat docks, and providing assistance to other orcement agencies. Another important activity while on the er is to look for any needed improvements such as the addition ourtesy docks at a launch ramp or the placement of buoys in a wake area to assist the boating public.

## *Enforcement-snowmobiling*

)uring the winter months, officers enforce the snowmobile s in the state. Each officer covers a territory of between eight velve counties, promoting safety for persons and the protec- of property connected with the use and operation of snow- biles. In addition to enforcement activities, officers are in- ed with accident investigations, teaching snowmobile safety rses, and certifying instructors for Iowa's mandatory youth rator snowmobile program. Another important activity in the ter is to work in conjunction with county engineers and local s in the establishment and development of trails on both lic and private property.

## *Education*

hroughout the year, officers promote recreational safety ughout the community. This activity can vary from a public ice talk at a club, to doing a radio spot at a local station. An vity of primary importance is certifying instructors to teach the a snowmobiling course.

he thrust of education activities varies according to the needs ach district, each officer becoming involved where he is led. The education program gives the officers a chance to use imagination and creativity.

**lajor Areas of Focus Are:** (1) Schools and youth groups; The media — radio, television, and newspapers; (3) Boating snowmobile clubs and organization; (4) Civic groups; Sport and vacation shows.

## *Training*

he Waters Section provides training for all officers. Also, e is continual in-service training covering all phases of educa- and enforcement. When waters officers are hired, they attend lowa Law Enforcement Academy for ten weeks where they ive training from the staff on all phases of law enforcement. n addition, an officer attends two one-week in-service training ions every year. The training covers additional Red Cross -aid, improvements in education techniques, and updating of enforcement changes. The in-service training keeps the offi- on top of the continuing changes in the law, and helps them to er serve the public. □



**DELIMMA** *(Continued from Page 7)*

elusive. It is true that coyote hunting is a social activity and provides a lot of recreation. In fact, it has been said that more hours of recreation are spent hunting coyotes in southern Iowa than any other game species. But more so than hunters of other game, these men are also performing a service to the livestock producers. Even though trapping may be a more effective and selective means of controlling some renegade coyotes, it is less popular.

## *Economic Impact*

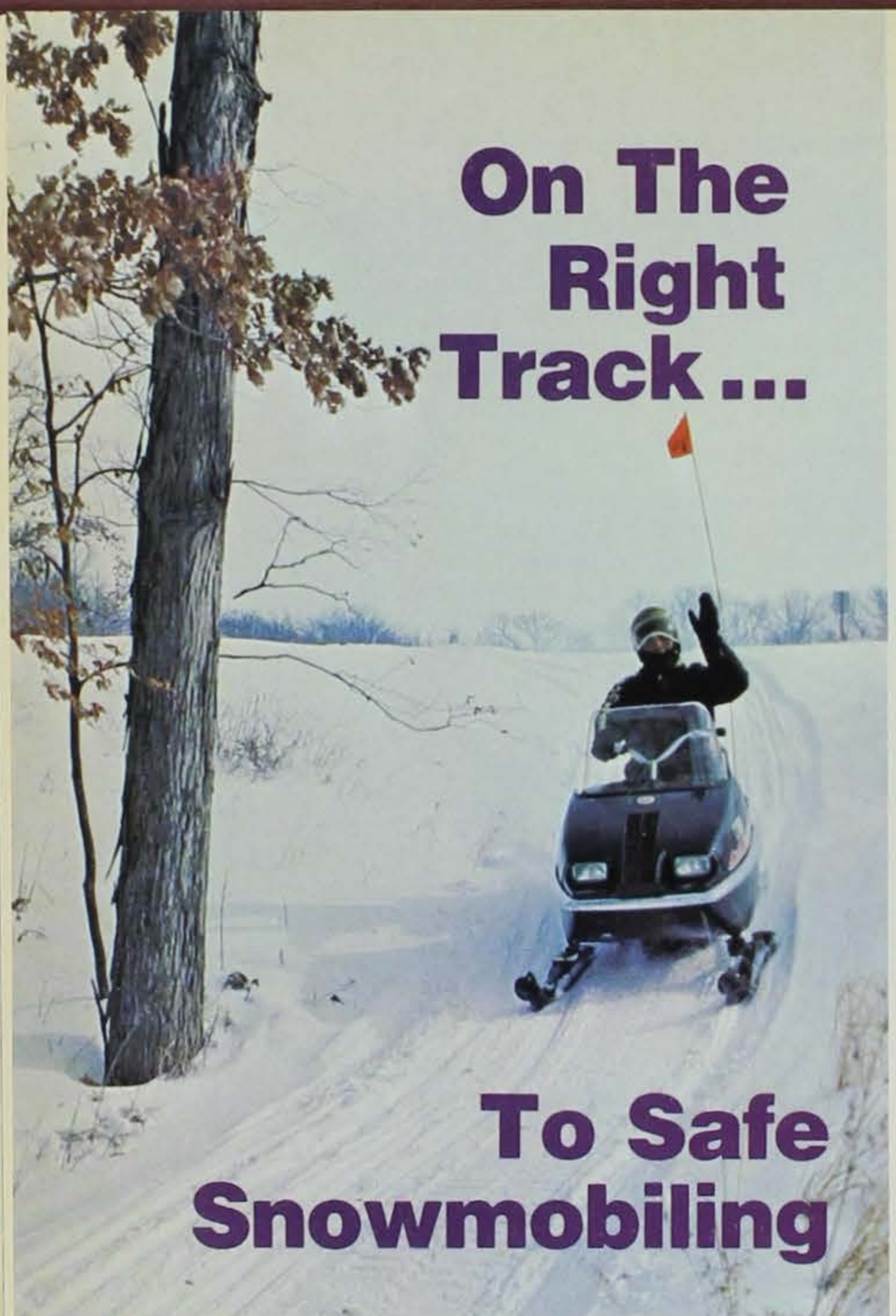
Several different factors should be considered with regard to the economic impact of this dilemma. Perhaps the most obvious is the loss of potential income to the sheep producer. On an individual level, if one producer with a flock of about 100 ewes and 100 lambs loses 10 percent of his sheep to predators, his monetary losses will be over $1,000 at current market prices. In such a situation, raising sheep would be a cost drain on the entire operation and he might decide to sell out his sheep and invest in a more profitable commodity. Renegade coyote and dog predators would certainly have a negative value as far as this sheep producer is concerned. Also, if this producer invests $500 into special fencing, a watch dog or some other type of predator deterrent and reduces his losses to only 5 percent, he wouldn't have gained a penny. These predators that kill sheep also have a negative cost effect on the economy as a whole. By killing sheep they are in competition with man as a consumer and, therefore, reduce the amount of money that would have entered the local economies through purchasing this commodity.

In making a fair economic analysis of this situation we must also look for possible benefits of predators as well as costs. It is difficult, however, to find any economic benefits for uncontrolled dogs. But with the current fur prices at an all time high, coyotes are certainly worth mentioning. Iowa coyotes are bringing an average of about $25 on the fur market. In addition to this, about ⅓ of the number of counties in Iowa pay a bounty which varies from $2 to $10 for each dead coyote turned in at the county court house. On an individual basis, a hunter or trapper may receive up to $1,000 for 30 coyotes harvested. Another indirect benefit of coyotes is their removal of rodents which compete with livestock for pasture and grain. However, it is difficult to come up with absolute values for this. Considerable money is spent buying gas, ammo, guns, cold weather gear, and other paraphernalia and this can have beneficial economic impact.

Benefits and costs can also be considered for each coyote. If a particular coyote kills one sheep valued at $50 and the fur and bounty values total $35, then this coyote has a net negative impact on the economy. This is all somewhat complex because there is no way to distinguish between good and bad coyotes.

While evaluating the impact of coyotes on the economy, we must not lose sight of the fact that the people who are benefitting from the coyote are not always the same ones that are suffering losses. In some areas of the state, though, different hunting groups use the fur and bounty money to support community activities such as open house dinners, rather than increase their own personal spending power.

During the past 4 years we have learned a great deal more about the life of the wily coyote in Iowa. The sheepmen and women of Iowa, as well as hunters and trappers, have been very instrumental in helping us gain more knowledge and a better understanding of how the coyote is affecting sheep producers, hunters and trappers, and the economy of Iowa as a whole. We are sincerely grateful for their support and cooperation. There are several other aspects to consider before the full picture of the Iowa coyote comes into focus. A few of these are daily movement patterns, reproduction and coyote interactions with deer, rabbits, fox, cattle, hogs, and other animals. More information is essential to good wildlife management and to help all Iowans learn to adapt to their recent furry neighbor. □



# On The Right Track... To Safe Snowmobiling

by Betsy Malueg
RECREATIONAL SAFETY COORDINATOR

*Photo by Ron Johnson*

The snowmobile has become a very popular vehicle for recreation and sport in the winter season. The machine is also used to a much lesser degree for essential winter travel by doctors and rescue workers.

The snowmobile's popularity is a mixed blessing. In addition to being exciting fun, the snowmobile can be very dangerous and must be used with care at all times for safety's sake and for the protection of wildlife. No snowmobiler wants to be involved in a snowmobile accident. The best way to keep out of trouble is to understand where and how snowmobile accidents happen and how they can be avoided. A study of accident reports and investigations indicate the following:

- One out of every two fatalities occur immediately on or adjacent to roadways.
- The primary cause of these accidents is collision with objects such as fences, guy wires, parked cars or moving vehicles. Collisions are overwhelmingly caused by operator error or inattention, especially when moving at high speeds.
- Stressors such as vibration, glare, exposure to wind, weather noise and alcohol can increase an operator's reaction time to twice that of his rested state.
- Approximately 70% of the fatal accidents occur after dark. The accident frequency during this time period may be attributed to limited visibility, diminished reaction time and/or poor judgement from fatigue. Victims tend to be males, who generally have had at least one year's experience on a snowmobile.

A few general concepts should be involved in protecting ourselves or our family from fatal injuries, or damaging accidents. They are:

## *Awareness of Outcome*

Most snowmobile accidents, no matter if they involve fatalities, injuries, or property damage, can *easily* be prevented if we simply stop to think for just a moment about the possible undesirable outcomes of the activity in which we are becoming involved. By simply thinkang where a certain action or activity may eventually lead us, we will have taken the first step toward a safe trip.

## *Chain of Events*

Accidents do not happen randomly. We are creatures of habit. We continually put off learning about hypothermia and cold weather clothing. We continually fail to inspect our snowmobile on a routine basis. Unfortunately we cannot expect to get away with it forever. Much pain, and grief can be saved if we would only pay attention to these small points.

## *Specific Defenses*

Specific defenses against the varied causes of snowmobile accidents, injuries and deaths are as follows:

- *Know your machine.* Don't just skim over your manual, study it. Obtain experience in the basic maneuvers such as turns, climbs and descents. Each day before starting any ride, make a few test turns and stops. This way you can determine snow conditions.
- *Be sure your snowmobile is in good mechanical condition;* you should check your snowmobile at least after every weekend.
- *Slow down at night,* lower your speed and keep an eye peeled for hidden obstacles. Watch out for rocks, snow covered logs and *wire fences* or guy wires. People have been badly lacerated and even decapitated by barbed wire fences that were hidden in snow drifts or simply not seen at night.
- *Make sure your throttle is not frozen* into an open position before you start your engine. Check it from time to time while you are driving.
- *Know your braking limitations.* As you are zipping along at a high rate of speed, keep in mind that brakes can only slow you down, they are not effective for an immediate stop.
- *Beware of ice.* Operating snowmobiles on ice is a major cause of snowmobile fatalities. Changing currents, especially during mild spells can drastically alter the thickness of ice almost overnight.
- *Wear warm clothes.* Proper clothing is extremely important in cold weather. Low temperature and wind resulting from the speed of the snowmobile can cause frost bite. Dress properly with sensible protective clothing.
- *Prepare for long trips.* For an extended snowmobile trip carry at least the following emergency equipment: first aid kit, repair kit, food and matches, fuel, survival blankets, compass and knife. Never ride off alone, you should be accompanied by at least one other machine. Advise someone of where you're going and when you will be returning.
- *Take a safe snowmobile course.* It is a simple and easy way to learn more about the way to make this winter a great snowmobile season. For more information contact the *Iowa Conservation Commission; Des Moines, Iowa.* □

# LOOKIN' BACK

## *Ten Years Ago*


the Iowa Conservationist ran a feature on big fish taken by anglers during 1969. There were two state records set. Cap Kennedy's 11 ound walleye has since been oken but John Lenhart's 4 pound, ıe ounce crappie still stands as the ate's best.

Two University of Iowa students peared before the commission to scuss their discovery of a cave hind Cold Water Spring in Win-esheik County and the Director gned a letter of intent on the con-ruction of Saylorville Reservoir d Big Creek Lake.

## *Twenty Years Ago*


the magazine examined the beauty of a series of waterfalls located near Clayton in Clayton County. The falls are etched into lime-one bluffs above the Mississippi iver. Below the limestone is a yer of pure white St. Peter forma-on sandstone.

A former professional baseball tcher named Ed Rickles of Ashvil-, Alabama was building a reputa-on for hunting with nothing but cks. So far he had "beaned" wild ar, bobcats, turkeys, ducks, ese, rabbits and other animals.

## *Thirty Years Ago*


the Conservationist called for common sense from Iowa's sportsmen. It was noted the state's game wardens could not catch all or prob-ly even most of the violators of e state's game laws. The article inted out that our natural re-ources could not be abused forever ithout disastrous results. Citizens ust show restraint in their own rvest and be willing to turn in ose who do not. This message om 1950 is equally valid today.

Snowy owls were making one of eir periodic invasions into Iowa.

# Warden's Diary

by Rex Emerson
LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

THE QUAIL SEASON ended January 6, 1980. The hunting pressure was light this past year due to fewer quail. Last winter's snow and ice just about wiped out the quail in southeast Iowa where I live. A good quail hunter will not even try to shoot all of the birds in a covey. Some will be needed for reproduction.

Quail hunting with the aid of a good pointing dog is without a doubt the finest sport in the world. To anyone who says quail are an easy target, I would say, *"You haven't had much experience hunting them."*

The limit this past year was six birds. That limit will quite often take all day to get. During the day you may flush six or seven coveys. Some coveys may not have more than eight birds, so you don't shoot. You wait to find a covey with about fifteen or twenty birds. The dog will range out wide, checking all of the most likely spots first, such as a hedgerow or a brushy row next to a grain field. If quail are not found there he will start checking the more open areas, such as the harvested grain field. When the dog catches the scent of quail he will stop abruptly and appear to be frozen. He will be looking at the spot where the scent is coming from. His tail will straighten out and be motionless, and one front foot is usually lifted slightly. That is the time to take a picture of your dog. If you don't quite like that pose you can pick up his back end and move it around and the dog should stay on point.

The quail may not be more than two or three feet from the dog, but they usually hold tight. Up to this point you, or the dog, have not seen the covey of quail, but you know they are there because the dog says so.

You get your shotgun in a ready position and start kicking around in the grass where the dog is looking. He still holds his point and seems to be saying, *"I know they are in there some place, boss."*

About the time you think your dog is lying, the entire covey bursts up all at once, all around you. No matter how many years you have been hunting, that covey rise is a thrill found unequalled by any other kind of hunting. I get flustered and shoot holes in the sky and hit nothing. The dog looks at me in disgust. He did his part, but I didn't do mine. Nevertheless he is still willing to hunt, so we head in the direction the quail flew. They will be scattered now and each point the dog makes will be a single. That usually makes a little easier target.

Years ago I took Ward Garrett on his first quail hunt. He was an excellent shot on the trap range and thought shooting quail would be easy. He didn't even get a shot off on the covey rise, just stood there and looked in disbelief. On the singles, just as he would shoot, the quail would turn quickly and fly into a ditch full of trees. He went back to shooting clay pigeons at the trapshoots.

One old fellow in southern Iowa told about the covey of quail on his place. He said, *"Every time I get after them they go into the dense timber. So far I have killed five trees, but no quail."*

A quail hunter at Oakville took a friend hunting. He told his friend, *"The quail are in short supply after last winter's storms, so we will only shoot the roosters and let the hens go."*

Now quail are easy to tell the male from the female in your hand, but next to impossible when they are flying. When the inexperienced hunter confessed that he didn't know a male quail from a female that was telling the old hunter just what he wanted to know. The experienced hunter told his friend, *"That's O.K. When a quail gets up I'll let you know which it is."*

So all day when a quail got up in front of the new hunter the old man hollered, *"Hen!"* When a quail got up in front of the experienced hunter he would shoot it.

When they got back to town and stopped for coffee, the empty-handed new quail hunter told everyone in the restaurant how *lucky* the other guy was. *"All the rooster quail got up in front of him."*

Another hunter came into town one evening about dark and reported he had lost his dog while hunting. An old-time hunter told him to go back to where he had let the dog out of the car and leave his hunting coat on the ground, and in the morning the dog would be there lying on the coat. He didn't explain about the dog recognizing the owner's scent being the reason this would work. The fellow went and bought a new hunting coat and placed it on the ground. Someone stole his new coat during the night. I don't know if he *ever* found his dog.

A quail hunter at Truro, Iowa used to let his wide ranging English pointer out of the car along the road next to what looked like a good field for quail. If the dog went on point he would go ask permission to hunt out there. When he would get back the dog would still be on point.

It takes good cover to have quail. Low growing brushy cover adjacent to a grain field is the best. The bulldozer is the quail's worst enemy. Good wildlife cover has been fast disappearing. The three dollars that you spend for a 'habitat stamp' will be used for habitat which will be beneficiary for all species of wildlife.




*"Evening Grosbeak" by James F. Landenberger*